

iii) But why ...?

“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!” *Job 38:4,5*

‘Jesus cried out ... My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ *Mtt 27:46*

‘Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.’ *Ps 23:4*



If God is sovereign why does He allow ...? Why does this happen? Why ...?

The questions are big, the questions are real and there are no easy answers. And when you’re in that place nobody else can try to answer, only God.

In the 2004 Tsunami I listened to a survivor being interviewed. The reporter asked ‘Where is your God in all of this?’ She replied something like this ... ‘Only you westerner reporters ask that question - God is here, in this, with us’.

Job was surrounded by ‘comforting’ friends who were probably if we’re honest doing a better job at trying to help than we often do.

But it was when God showed up that Job (and the others) fell silent ‘Where were you when ...’ *Job ch 38-41*. Job falls silent and knows his place *Job 42:5-6*.

We may not like or understand what God does (or what He seems to allow), we may not have faith to believe in that moment, but even so He is still our God.

‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ - note you are still ‘my God’.

‘Even though we walk...’ He is with us and He is God.

Pause for Personal Prayer



Has your heart been tested? Take time to talk quietly with God.

Discuss



- What has helped you to know God’s presence in the hard times?
- What has hindered? Pray for each other.

Taking it Further

- Take time over the week to prayerfully read *Is 40:9-31*.
- Ask God to show Himself to you, His presence with you.

1. The Sovereignty of God

God invites us to an amazing journey, to walk with Him and to know Him.

To know how Big He is,

To know how much He loves us

And to know His unshakable commitment to us.

Fear, striving, loss of hope come when we loose sight of these things.

Security, rest and fruitfulness come as we see them more clearly.

In this short series of studies we are asking God to show us more of who He is and who we are with Him.

The studies can be used for private devotion or group study.

These are not new truths but the divine foundation of our faith.

We begin by trying to touch heaven! By trying to get even the smallest glimpse of how big God is – the Sovereignty of our God.

Let’s prayerfully ask God to take us deeper.

Let’s enjoy!

Sue

I) God Himself

'Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers... "To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One.' *Isaiah 40:21,22,25*

'God said to Moses, "I am who I am..." *Ex 3:14*



'Do you not know? Have you not heard? *Is 40:21*

The small amount that we've known and heard of God is just scratching the surface, a drop in the ocean.

Our human minds struggle to even begin to understand the greatness of God. Try reading *Isaiah 40* slowly and prayerfully – 'do you not know?'

He is beyond what we can ever imagine or even try to believe.

Isaiah had seen the Lord - 'I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple ... "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." *Is 6:1-3*

No wonder he then cried "Woe to me!" ... 'I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.'" v5.

As we seek intimacy with God, do we at times forget His majesty?

When God said to Moses 'I am who I am' it had the sense of 'and I will be who I will be' - if you want to know Me, don't sit down, walk with Me!

Sometimes we see more clearly in the storm 'Be still and know' *Ps 46:10*

Pause for Personal Prayer



Read *Isaiah 40:12-18*. slowly and prayerfully, enjoy.

Discuss



- What struck you as you read *Is 40:12-18*?
- What helps you to peek more at God's greatness?
- Have there been times in the storm when you've known that He is God?

ii) God's Sovereignty in His Work

I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.' *Is 46:10*

'For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.' *Rms 9:15-16*

'if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.' *2 Tim 2:13*



God is sovereign in His work, He makes 'known the end from the beginning'. He will do all that He pleases - He cannot fail!

If we truly know that God cannot fail, why are we fearful, anxious or striving?

God is self determining, 'I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.' *Rm 9:15 & Ex 33:19*

It's by His mercy that God wants to use us and to show His glory in us but He doesn't depend on our ability to will or to run, or to 'get it right'. God can show His mercy and His compassion unilaterally – from His side only!

When God made His covenant with Abraham it was one sided, God did the promising as the pot went through the fire, Moses received. *Gen 15:17-18*.

God isn't thrown when we are faithless, He just remains faithful *2 Tim 2:13*.

When God shows us what He is going to do or allows us a place in His work it is only by mercy, therefore 'we do not loose heart.' *2 Cor 4:1*

That doesn't let us off the hook, our part is to respond to His mercy, to be ready for any good work (*2 Tim 2:21*) to abide in Him so as to bear much fruit (*Jn 15*). But even that is by His grace (*Phil 2:13*) so that we don't touch His glory.

In mercy He may choose to use us but God remains sovereign in His own work.

Pause for Personal Prayer



Read *Is 40:10*. Do you believe that God cannot fail?

Discuss



- Do you believe that God cannot fail? - Discuss.
- What then is our responsibility?
- What happens if we fail?